



# A MATTER OF SUBSTANCE: AT-A-GLANCE

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DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## DIVISION QUICK FACTS

### Suicide Prevention Training:

Today's students face increasing economic, academic and social pressures, which can lead to emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide. In Iowa, suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15-24 year-olds and the third leading cause of death for 5-14 year-olds.

To help protect our youth, you may participate in new interactive, online courses where you can learn best practices in discussing your concerns with students and if necessary, referring them to a school counselor, social worker, or psychologist. These courses include: *At-Risk for High School Educators* simulates conversations with three high school students at risk for psychological distress; *At-Risk for Middle School Educators* simulates conversations with three middle school students at risk for psychological distress, and also addresses topics such as bullying; and *Step In, Speak Up!* emulates conversations with three LGBTQ students who are facing a multitude of difficulties and dangers, such as physical and verbal harassment, absenteeism, and thoughts of suicide. All three courses are provided as a free resource by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

While the trainings may be focused towards educators, the information provided can be useful to a wide range of audiences. Additional information about the trainings and access to the trainings may be obtained [HERE](#) or by contacting Pat McGovern, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, at [pat.mcgovern@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:pat.mcgovern@idph.iowa.gov).

### Alcohol and Caffeine: A Dangerous Cocktail

Recently **Jackson Recovery Centers** had an article in their E-Newsletter on *Alcohol and Caffeine: A Dangerous Cocktail*. The article was very informative and we want to pass the information along to our readers as well.

Alcohol energy drinks such as Four Loko, Jooze, and 24/7 became popular during the last decade. However, in 2010, the Food and Drug Administration sent warning letters to the manufacturers telling them to stop production because of dangers related to the drinks. In response, many products were discontinued. While alcohol energy drinks may be more difficult to find, many young drinkers continue to mix alcohol with energy drinks.

One of the problems with mixing these two substances is that it makes it hard to determine how intoxicated you are. Caffeine is a stimulant and fights off the body's natural defense of lethargy, which helps prevent over-consumption of alcohol. This puts the individual at a higher risk for problems such as alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, or driving while under the influence.

In Canada, the city of Toronto has taken some steps to address these dangers. The public board of health recently proposed prohibiting energy drinks to be served with alcohol at municipal events. The Toronto Star also reports that energy drinks are now classified as a food product, allowing for federal government regulation. New regulations limit the amount of caffeine in the product and require labels to list nutritional facts along with a warning to consumers not to mix the energy drink with alcohol.

Please share the dangers associated with mixing alcohol and energy drinks with your friends and family.

### Director's Corner:

As another year comes to an end, I'd like to thank every one of you for your dedicated work this past year. It's you — the committed and passionate professionals and peers who work in our field — that make a difference every day in the lives of the individuals, families and communities we serve. *Happy Holidays!* Thanks, Kathy Stone

## UPCOMING EVENTS

#### 'App'rehensive: The Blurring Lines of Gaming and Gambling

February 11 - Webinar 11:45 - 1:30pm

For more information, go to the Training Resources website at [www.trainingresources.org](http://www.trainingresources.org).

#### SAVE THE DATE 38th Annual Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse

March 31 - April 1

Veterans Memorial - Comm. Choice Credit Union Conv. Center  
For more information, watch the Training Resources website at [www.trainingresources.org](http://www.trainingresources.org).

For more information about the Division of Behavioral Health, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/bh](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bh)

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